

Supplemental Memorandum

To: STATE BOARD MEMBERS

Date: March 3, 2003

From: Sue Stickel

Re: ITEM # 11

Subject: Proposed intervention for 24 schools in Cohort 1 of the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) that failed to show significant growth in 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

Recommendations: That the State Board of Education (SBE) (a) require 21 school districts to enter into contracts with Approved School Assistance and Intervention Team (SAIT) Providers for each of the 24 state-monitored schools and (b) allow the governing board of each school district to retain its legal rights, duties, and responsibilities with respect to any state-monitored school within its jurisdiction.

Background: The II/USP program authorizes two types of interventions:

Intervention Type One: According to the provisions of Education Code 52055.5, the SPI shall:

- Assume all the legal rights, duties, and powers of the governing board
- Reassign the principal of that school, subject to a hearing, and
- Do one or more of the following with respect to a state-monitored school:
 - Revise attendance options;
 - Allow parents to apply directly to the SBE to establish a charter school;
 - Assign the management of the school to a school management organization;
 - Reassign other certificated employees of the school;
 - Renegotiate a new collective bargaining agreement at the expiration of the existing one;
 - Reorganize the school;
 - Close the school; and/or
 - Place a trustee at the school for no more than 3 years.

Intervention Type Two: Education Code 52055.51 provides that as an alternative to the above, the SPI, with the approval of the SBE, may require districts to contract with a School Assistance and Intervention Team (SAIT) in lieu of other interventions.

- SAIT teams are composed of 6-10 educators with experience in curriculum and instruction aligned to state standards, school leadership, academic assessment, fiscal allocation, and research-based reform strategies.
- Teams visit each school for a week, assess the quality and implementation of school plans, visit every classroom, observe teaching and learning, talk with students, teachers, administrators, and other staff, and conduct a parent forum.

- Each SAIT issues a Report of Findings and Corrective Actions. The local governing board must adopt the SAIT recommendations. The work of the SAIT continues with technical assistance and support, as well as quarterly monitoring of the school's progress toward meeting specified benchmarks for improvement.

In preparation for potential use of the SAIT option, the following activities have occurred, or are poised to occur:

- The SBE approved criteria for approval of SAIT Providers at the April 25, 2002 meeting.
- Twenty-six organizations and sixty-eight "Leads" were approved based on demonstrated evidence of turning around under-performing schools. They were then trained to a state-designed audit process that was piloted in 2001 and 2002 under federal Program Improvement sanction.
- Local Education Agencies with state-monitored schools will contract with Approved SAIT Provider organizations to conduct audits in April 2003, prepare a Report of Findings and Corrective Actions for Local Board adoption, and ensure the provision of support and monitoring to document school progress.

The recommendation to require districts to enter into contracts with School Assistance and Intervention Team Providers is based upon the following:

- An analysis of the achievement history of these schools over the past three years does not yield findings that would justify a more serious intervention. Moreover, the telephone survey completed for these schools, as requested by the SBE in October 2002, suggests that many, if not most, appear to be taking the initial steps to insure an instructional program aligned to state standards and are using current state-adopted materials. (See Attachment 1 to original Item # 11.) Given that these schools may be on the right track, more serious interventions may not be appropriate.
- The SAIT intervention will be designed to not interfere with any effective practices and/or appropriate resource allocations currently underway at the school. Rather, it will provide information about any needed revisions in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and human and fiscal resource allocation to insure that these schools are moving in the right direction. The California Department of Education (CDE) will provide administrative oversight of Approved SAIT Providers to monitor the SAIT process.
- The approval of SAIT Provider organizations occurred in August 2002 with training for Approved Providers and Leads in September 2002. Since almost six months has elapsed, the SPI will reconvene the SAIT Leads, confirm that they understand the underlying principles guiding the work and train them on some revisions that have been made in the audit tool and review process, particularly focusing on the needs of the state-monitored schools.

Now that SB 1310 has become law, it is apparent that several provisions need further clarification. The SPI is committed to seeking modifications in two areas:

- First, current law does not allow the SPI and the SBE to intervene in the SAIT process until 36 months have elapsed after the assignment of the SAIT. Thus, the SPI will seek legislative language in the current session to make the SAIT organizations more immediately accountable and allow the SPI, with the concurrence of the SBE, to remove a SAIT and select an alternative intervention if, within one year of the SAIT assignment, the SAIT Provider is judged inappropriate for the school or the SAIT

Provider recommends, and the state concurs, that a more serious intervention is needed.

- Second, amendments will be sought to provide recourse for Local Education Agencies to get relief from SAIT recommendation for corrective actions that are shown to be inappropriate or ineffective for school improvement.